

Mussar HaMadda

A Chofetz Chaim of San Diego/Roslin/Monsey Publication

14 Adar , 5757

The Chicken/ The Hen

“WHY DID THE CHICKEN CROSS THE ROAD...TO GET TO THE OTHER SIDE.”(DUMB

JOKES 1:1)

AT first glance, this joke is rather dumb. Isn't it obvious that a chicken would cross the road to get to the other side? If she didn't want to get to the other side, he wouldn't have bothered crossing! Furthermore, why has a joke with such a sensible and absurdly rational punchline endured as a scintillating example of saucy wit? Could it be that our country's joke writers are under secret financial influence by the likes of Purdue and Empire? Did Frank Purdue spend a night in the Lincoln Bedroom?

**Vodka corrupts.
Absolut vodka
corrupts
absolutely.**

The answer is a resounding yes. It is true that crossing the road to get to the other side is a very sensible and absurdly logical thing to do. However, the humor from this one emanates not so much from what the chicken did but what he **DIDN'T** do. The chicken could have been on her way to do some volunteer *chesed* project. She could have been on her way to learn some *mussar* with her husband. Instead, this chicken was crossing the road with the sole objective of getting to the other side. **Hence** the humor.

Of course, even chickens don't cross the road just to get to the other side. It could be that she was on her way to play bridge with some friends. She could have been going to the butcher to visit some friends. She could even have been going to join the other hens and chicks at a prayer group. As long as she wasn't doing anything of spiritual value, it is as if she was just crossing the road with the sole intention to get to the other side(*sitra achra*). The featherbrain in question displayed such a lack of understanding of her role in shaping *Klal Yisroel* that we are forced to cackle in loud, loony laughter.

**SISTERHOOD
ANNOUNCES
FORMATION OF
WOMEN'S
MUSSAR
GROUPS!**

At the same time, we must also cluck in sympathy. She was probably the famous Little Red Hen who found a grain of wheat. After receiving no help planting it, harvesting the resulting grains, milling them, and baking them, she sought to teach a lesson to the *beheimah gassahs* who refused to help her along the way, but volunteered to help her eat it. By saying “I'm going to eat it all by myself!”(Mother Goose 25:48), she instead gave the impression of a gluttonous fool who didn't know how to eat like a bird. Why didn't she just donate the rest of the bread she wouldn't have otherwise eaten to tzedakah? By showing she wasn't getting any benefit from the rest, she would have gotten the message across and avoided appearing like a glutton. Why did she so utterly fail?

**Cloning- where
every pair of
genes is a hand-
me-down.**

Assuming that this is the same chicken who crossed the road, we can easily pluck out the answer. The chicken (a.k.a the Little Red Hen) was self-centered. While she meant to teach a valuable lesson, she couldn't think in terms of others less fortunate than herself.

We must always keep in mind the higher goals and aspirations we have by being here in Chofetz Chaim. Should we fail to keep this in mind, we might end up as featherweights.

Mussar Hamadda Copyright 1997. This publication is neither affiliated with, nor endorsed by, Shaar Press and the Vaad Harabbonim of Queens. Not and Shot were best of friends. Not was shot and Shot was not. Moral: it is better to be Shot than Not. You've seen the Pilpul Shiur- now see the movie! SHTAR WARS- a New Pshat. May the Four Horses be with you!

Rated: G-5707. Bahelfer Guidance Suggested.